



July 18, 2016

Secretary Rick Brajer
NC Department of Health and Human Services - Adams Building
101 Blair Drive
Raleigh, NC 27699

Dear Secretary Brajer,

We write on behalf of the Reach Out and Read program and our network of more than 800 trained providers across North Carolina to thank the NC Department of Health and Human Services for recognizing the Reach Out and Read program in the Medicaid waiver document. Thanks also for acknowledging that integrating this program into pediatric primary care throughout the state will further the goals of the waiver: better health outcomes for children and lower costs for the State of North Carolina.

Reach Out and Read providers work across North Carolina in rural and urban communities, reaching families in pediatric and family practice clinics, community health centers, and any other medical home where children are seen for check-ups. Reach Out Read's evidence-based model incorporates books into pediatric care and encourages families to read aloud together. Our program maximizes the close and trusting relationship between families and their medical providers. This relationship presents a unique opportunity for the provider to educate parents about the central role they play in fostering their child's healthy brain development by reading aloud and through shared language, stories, and conversation. The American Academy of Pediatrics 2014 policy statement "Literacy Promotion: An Essential Component of Primary Care Pediatric Practice," names Reach Out and Read, supporting the program's approach to stimulating optimal patterns of brain development and strengthening parent-child relationships at a critical time in child development.

A body of peer-reviewed research finds that the Reach Out and Read intervention has positive effects for children, families, and clinical environments. Through a recently completed Reach Out and Read Cost Benefit Analysis, we also know that the Reach Out and Read program produces significant cost savings, including remediation costs for children who enter school unprepared for success.

The waiver document demonstrates an understanding of the importance of the medical home in the lives of children, who comprise the majority of Medicaid beneficiaries. We appreciate that the Department recognizes Reach Out and Read as an evidence-based



where great stories begin™

intervention, and a true population-based approach to early brain development and to fostering overall child and family bonding. The waiver document envisions including Reach Out and Read in contracts with Primary Healthcare Providers. Reach Out and Read stands ready to support providers throughout the State with training, technical assistance, and a full menu of supports to ensure high-quality implementation of the model in all clinical locations.

Thank you for including Reach Out and Read in the Medicaid Waiver, and for recognizing Reach Out and Read's commitment to developing the brains and bodies of our youngest North Carolinians. We look forward to working with you as your plans develop.

Thank you,

Callee Boulware
Executive Director
Reach Out and Read Carolinas

Dr. David Tayloe
Medical Director
Reach Out and Read Carolinas